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SPECIAL REPORT

MONGOLIA: SOVIET ADVOCATE IN ASIA

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MONGOLIA: SOVIET ADVOCATE IN ASIA

Mongolian-Chinese relations have steadily deteriorated during the past few years, despite an energetic effort by Peiping between 1955 and 1960 to increase its political leverage in Ulan Bator. Mongolia's vigorous backing of Moscow in the Sino-Soviet dispute has sparked most of the friction with China, and it has increased as a result of the recent Soviet-inspired publicity focused on Peiping's old territorial ambitions in Mongolia.

It is clear that the leaders in Ulan Bator believe both their foreign and domestic interests are best served by close alignment with the Soviet Union. During the past few years the Soviets have steadily increased the flow of aid to Mongolia as a means of assuring continued political dominance.

Some strains have been imposed within the Mongolian Communist Party by its submission to Moscow, but purges conducted in 1962 and 1963 have apparently left the pro-Soviet group in firm control. Mongolian nationalism remains strong, but the achievements and benefits made possible by the relationship with Moscow tend to nullify any existing feelings of dissatisfaction.

Chinese Territorial Claims

The old spectre of Chinese territorial ambitions in Mongolia was revived recently as an irritant in relations between Ulan Bator and Peiping. The Soviet Union raised the subject in a tendentious Pravda editorial on 2 September commenting on a July 1964 interview between Mao Tse-tung and a group of visiting Japanese. The editorial quoted selectively from Mao's remarks in an attempt to prove that the Chinese Communists wanted to make Mongolia a "Chi-

nese province." Pravda asserted that Mao had asked Khrushchev in 1954 to agree to a Chinese takeover. This assertion formed a part of a general attack on Peiping's "hegemonistic schemes" in Asia which Moscow has intensified in the context of the Sino-Soviet dispute during the past summer.

Actually, the Soviet charges probably do not accurately reflect present Chinese policy toward the Mongolian People's Republic (MPR). According to the Japanese

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account of Mao's remarks during the interview, the Chinese leader had urged the Russians to give Mongolia "full independence." Chinese claims to sovereignty over Mongolia, moreover, were legally extinguished by the Sino-Soviet agreement in 1950 on a "complete guarantee of the independent status" of the MPR Some differences remained between Peiping and Ulan Bator over the alignment of their boundary, but these were formally settled in a treaty signed in 1962. Probably with an eye to its then inflamed border conflict with India, Peiping seems to have adopted a generous pose during negotiations and apparently surrendered its claims to most of the territory in dispute. The agreement was followed by protocols in 1963 and 1964 incorporating the results of ground surveys.

The domination of Mongolia probably still remains a long-range goal, but Peiping's attitude toward it in recent years has been mainly defensive.

The Soviet charges seem certain to accelerate the pronounced downward trend in Sino-Mongolian relations evident since the conclusion of the 1962 border treaty. Taking their cue from the Russian attack on the Chinese, the Mon-

golians reacted quickly with some very sharp propaganda of their own. One Ulan Bator editorial, for example, denounced the "sinister" Chinese plans to absorb Mongolia, and lumped the Peiping leadership with the "Kuomintang reactionaries." old Chinese warlords, and Manchu emperors in alleged territorial maneuvers. If the Chinese had succeeded, the editorial declared, the people of the MPR would have shared the "fate" of the Inner Mongolians and other national minorities now under Peiping's hegemony.

This reaction is one more illustration of Ulan Bator's difficult geographic and political position, sandwiched between the rival and powerful centers of world Communism and yet seeking to retain some measure of independence and political flexibility. The nature of the Mongolian dilemma was readily apparent in the editorial handling of an alleged remark by Mao that Moscow had come to dominate the MPR under the guise of ensuring its independence. Although the Mongolian propagandists labeled this a "shameless slander," they tacitly admitted to Moscow's paramount influence by acknowledging that Mongolian independence would have been lost had not the MPR "linked its destiny" with the Soviet Union.

Soviet Ties

Historically, the MPR has had very little choice in its dependence on the USSR, since the Soviets had a 25-year head start on Peiping in cementing their foothold. Mongolian diplomatic and trade ties were tightly monopolized by the Soviets, who discouraged other foreign contacts until well after World War II. Ulan Bator's lack of diplomatic relations, in fact, helped defeat Moscow's 1946 bid to have Mongolia admitted to the UN. In 1948, the MPR was finally recognized by North Koreal but its first free world diplomatic ties did not come until 1955

During this period Moscow supplied nearly all foreign assistance received by Ulan Bator. Prior to the end of World War II, however. Soviet aid was mostly military in character. The pattern began to change in the late Forties, in part because of a greater Soviet capability to render aid, and also because of a desire to ensure continued Soviet political domination in Ulan Bator in the face of the establishment of the Peiping regime. Between 1950 and 1963 the Soviets extended over \$650 million in economic assistance to the MPR. This aid has been a major factor in sustaining and developing the Mongolian economy.

Economic Rivalry

Soviet concern over Peiping's intentions in Mongolia was not ill-founded. It became clear in

1955 that the Chinese were hoping to undermine Moscow's influence through a program of economic competition. Under an initial assistance agreement, 10,000 Chinese laborers were sent to Mongolia to help build industrial and housing projects. Peiping subsequently sweetened the pot with several economic credit grants which by 1960 totaled \$115 million. Soviet economic competition has provided a real shot in the arm to Ulan Bator, since by 1963 total assistance extended from Peiping and Moscow mounted to approximately \$800 per capita. Nowhere else, inside or outside the bloc, has Soviet or Chinese assistance been of such magnitude.

In recent years Moscow has pointed to its assistance to Mongolia as an example of the benefits which can accrue from close cooperation with the USSR. Mongolian party chief Tsedenbal has described the relationship between the MPR and the USSR as a "model of equality and mutual assistance between large and small states," which has "great significance" as a guide to underdeveloped nations in reorganizing their "socioeconomic" life.

Economic Situation

In reality, economic conditions in the MPR are not nearly as good as implied by Tsedenbal. Despite bloc assistance, the Mongolians have had considerable trouble keeping up with planned economic targets.

Significant gains have been made but the expansion of agriculture and industry started from a very small base, and these activities are still woefully undeveloped. The MPR remains heavily dependent on livestock for the bulk of food consumed, for the livelihood of its one million people, and for most of the raw materials used for industry and exports.

The nature of Mongolia's economic difficulties was clearly evident in the severe setback caused by very heavy snowstorms last winter and spring which took a heavy toll in livestock. Emergency pleas had to be made to Moscow for additional assistance, and two new Soviet aid agreements were announced between March and May 1964, one specifically described as a contribution to help "overcome" Ulan Bator's "temporary" economic problems.

The agreements, which were followed by a third Soviet credit grant in October, also appeared designed to fill gaps left by the disruption of Chinese economic assistance to Mongolia. Peiping's largesse between 1956 and 1960 earned it little political leverage in Ulan Bator, and it appears that the Chinese have given up serious thoughts of economic competition there with Mos-Although the Chinese are apparently following through with assistance on some long-programmed Mongolian industrial projects, it is believed that Peiping has balked at firmly earmarking much of the promised credits for the 1961-65 period. All remaining Chinese construction workers in

Mongolia returned home between April and July 1964, probably at Ulan Bator's request inasmuch as the recent agreements with the USSR provide extensive Soviet manpower and technical assistance on construction projects.

The difficulties encountered in meeting the goals of the 1961-65 Five-Year Plan, however, apparently have not affected living standards significantly. Soviet aid has filled the gap. Mongolians are better fed and better clothed than in the past, and are served by nationwide educational and public health systems.

Policy planners in the MPR expect an increased flow of assistance from the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (CEMA) to alleviate the country's economic problems. Moscow permitted Mongolia to become, in June 1962, the first non-European member of CEMA. Discussions were held in Ulan Bator in October 1963 with representatives from the USSR and the European bloc countries to coordinate Mongolian economic planning for the next 20 years.

Current Chinese Relations

Mongolia's public criticism of China has been accompanied since 1963 by harassment and restriction of Chinese travelers and diplomats in the MPR.

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Despite the increased friction, there is some evidence to suggest that Ulan Bator is reluctant to allow relations to deteriorate to the point implied in its propaganda diatribes against Peiping. The Mongolian delegation to the Chinese National Day celebrations this year, for example, was led by one of the MPR's highest ranking party and government officials, S. Lubsan.

There is some indication that the MPR may, probably at the bidding of the new Soviet leaders, tone down its strident anti-Chinese stance. A joint Polish-Mongolian communique, issued at the end of a recent visit by Tsedenbal and after Khrushchev was bounced, stated that ideological differences in the Communist movement should not be transferred to relations between states. The Mongolians have been exceedingly cautious

in their references to the recent Soviet party-government changes, apparently being anxious to avoid being caught up in any internal Soviet quarrel. Ulan Bator's silence on the purge also reflects the equivocal position taken by the new Soviet leaders, who have themselves gone slowly pending consolidation of their own position.

Since Premier Tsedenbal and his lieutenants are convinced that Mongolian domestic and foreign interests are best served by close alignment with Moscow, however, it is likely that the course of MPR-Chinese relations will closely follow the general trend established by the Soviet Union.

Domestic Political Developments

One factor which has long complicated Ulan Bator's relations with both Moscow and Peiping has been the presence of significant Mongol minorities in both countries. Pan-Mongolism, or the political union of all Mongols into a "greater Mongolia," has been an important issue in the past. It has been soft pedaled by the present Mongolian leadership, however, because of the obvious problems such a policy would create with the Soviet Union and Communist China.

The spirit of nationalism reflected in the Pan-Mongol

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movement has also exerted an influence on political developments inside the MPR during the past few years. In September 1962, for example, D. Tomor-Ochir was ousted from the Mongolian party politburo on charges of being anti-Soviet and "nationalistic." In December 1963 L. Tsend was also dropped from the politburo amidst indications that he had lost the confidence of the Soviets and had probably become a threat to Tsedenbal. It is possible also that Tsend had objected to the increasing role of CEMA in Mongolian economic plan-In both cases there were indications that the purged leaders favored a more independent role for Mongolia vis-a-vis the Soviet Union. They were both charged with overstressing the "positive" contributions of Genghis Khan, thereby arousing nationalist passions "inconsistent with the doctrine of proletarian internationalism." There is no solid proof that either was pro-Peiping, but either or both may have favored "using"

the Chinese as a counterweight to Moscow.

It appears that the purges have removed any serious threat to Tsedenbal's leadership and the implementation of his poli-There is certainly no evidence that the position of the party chief or his lieutenants has been significantly weakened as a result of their pro-Soviet stand. The achievements of the regime -- brought about largely because of the relationship with the Union--mitigate overt expression of hostility toward the national leadership or toward the Soviet Union. In return for Soviet protection and economic assistance, the Mongolian regime will probably continue to conduct itself as a grateful satellite should. copying the Soviet model in domestic programs and supplying prompt and unequivocal support for all Soviet foreign policies.

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